



*Town of Mansfield*

**A Resolution Concerning African American Revolutionary War Patriots of Mansfield, Connecticut and the Proposed National Liberty Memorial**

**WHEREAS**, Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate in May 2011 to complete the unfinished business of two decades: the construction of an entirely citizen-funded National Liberty Memorial to African Americans of the Revolutionary War at a location in the monumental core of Washington, D.C.; and

**WHEREAS**, from 1775 to 1783, an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 slaves and free persons served as soldiers, sailors and patriots in the Revolutionary War, including Cato Mead of Norwich, Connecticut, and later of Montrose, Iowa, while tens of thousands of men, women and children provided civilian assistance, ran away from slavery and petitioned courts and the General Assembly for freedom; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 800 African Americans who resided in over 80 towns and cities, and all eight counties, in Connecticut served in the Revolutionary War; and

**WHEREAS**, one known African American soldier and patriot from Mansfield named Asher Allen participated in the struggle for independence; and

**WHEREAS**, although the original memorial was not constructed, and the authority to do so has lapsed, genealogical research and the publication of hundreds of books over more than two decades reaffirm the significant contributions made by African Americans of the post-colonial period and validates their influence on the patriotism of future generations and the movement for civil rights; and

**WHEREAS**, the momentum to construct a national memorial, and to finally compile a comprehensive list of African American patriots, arose in 1984 out of the quest of Lena Santos Ferguson, deceased, of our sister town of Plainville, Connecticut to honor her heritage and expand the nation's understanding of the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 1984, Rep. Nancy Johnson, Senator Lowell Weicker, and Senator Chris Dodd were leaders in the enactment and advocacy of landmark legislation, including

Public Law 98-245 commemorating African American patriotism and Public Laws 99-558 and 100-265 that authorize a national memorial and declare the history of “preeminent historical and lasting significance to the nation.”

**WHEREAS**, these combined efforts, reported by the Hartford Courant over 24 years, brought about the publication in 2008 of *Forgotten Patriots, African American and American Indian Patriots in the Revolutionary War*, which contains the longest list so far of African Americans in the Revolutionary War, **NOW THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL OF MANSFIELD** joins the National Mall Liberty Fund, D.C., ([www.libertyfunddc.org](http://www.libertyfunddc.org)) the congressional sponsors and original cosponsors of the National Liberty Memorial Act, including Rep. Donald Payne of New Jersey and Rep. Frank Wolf of Virginia, and those who applaud the decision of Congress and President Reagan in 1988 to authorize the predecessor memorial at a site between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mansfield Town Council encourages volunteers to discover the names of still-unknown African American Revolutionary War soldiers, sailors and patriots, enlarge the body of knowledge about their lives and forward the information to National Mall Liberty Fund D.C. for inclusion in a database that will celebrate the trail blazers of Mansfield together with those of hundreds of proud American communities.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mansfield Town Council urges the Connecticut Delegation to the United States Congress to work for the enactment of the National Liberty Memorial Act and to spread knowledge of the history to institutions in Tolland County while promoting its potential for understanding and unity throughout the nation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk of the Mansfield Town Council forward certified copies of this Resolution to the entire Connecticut Delegation to the United States Congress, the Governor of the State of Connecticut, the Speaker and President Pro Tem of the General Assembly and the local superintendent of schools, librarian and historical society.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have set my hand and caused the Corporate Seal of the Town of Mansfield to be affixed on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June in the year 2011.

*Elizabeth C. Paterson*

Mayor, Town of Mansfield